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RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1883
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1846
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUSHANBE 001950

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SUBJECT: "FAIR AND ACCURATE" INFORMATION THE KEY TO GOOD U.S.-UZBEK RELATIONS, SAYS UZBEK DIPLOMAT IN DUSHANBE

CLASSIFIED BY: Tom Hushek, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy Dushanbe, STATE.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: The key to improved U.S.-Uzbek relations is to provide leadership with "true, accurate and fair information," according to Mirodil Abdurazzakov, the Uzbek Ambassador in Dushanbe. In an Oct. 19 meeting with PolOff, Abdurazzakov described Uzbek democracy as "more diplomatic" than that of the West, and claimed the Uzbeks have a "different mentality" about democracy. He raised the issue of the U.S. refusal to sign the Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, describing Uzbekistan as the champion of the non-proliferation movement in Central Asia. Abdurazzakov dismissed Tajik complaints about border problems, insisting transit and visa issues with Uzbekistan are easily overcome through "paperwork." END SUMMARY.

"Fair and Accurate" Reporting

12. (C) Uzbekistan is ready to cooperate with the U.S., said Abdurazzakov, but Uzbekistan has been unfairly blamed for current poor relations between the two countries. He argued that the United States should take more of the blame for the downturn in relations. Uzbek democracy, he reasoned, differs from the Western version, is more "respectful, indirect and diplomatic." Reports from United States on last year's events in Andijon were "not fair and accurate," according to Abdurazzakov, who insisted that "the U.S. would do the same if faced with the same situation." He was adamant that the Uzbek government had taken the proper steps to deal with the uprising, but said his country hopes to have good relations with all countries in the world, particularly Russia, China and the U.S. The key to this, he opined, is to provide leadership with "true, accurate and fair information."

Suspicious of U.S. Intentions Regarding a Nuclear-free Zone

13. (C) Abdurazzakov was very interested to know why the U.S. did not support the Central Asia Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zone Treaty, hinting that the U.S., France and the U.K. might have "other reasons to avoid a nuclear-free zone" (though he stopped short at being specific on what he thought those reasons might be). He said Uzbekistan had initiated the idea of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in Central Asia in 1993 at the UNGA and remarked that it was impossible to foresee what problems the United States would have with its final form. He emphasized that Uzbekistan would like all nuclear powers, both declared and

undeclared, to support the treaty.

"OUR BORDER IS OPEN"

14. (C) "Our border is open," insisted Abdurazzakov when asked about problems Tajik citizens and businesses face in obtaining visas and exporting goods through Uzbekistan. "People are not informed of the proper legal documents needed to transit between the two countries," he said, but the problems can easily be resolved by addressing the authorities and filling out the proper paperwork. Despite reports to the contrary, he insisted that Tajiks can get a visas in one day to visit a sick or dying loved one in Uzbekistan. Regarding the exportation of goods across the Uzbek border, only alcohol and tobacco are restricted, claimed Abdurazzakov.

COMMENT

15. (C) The Uzbeks are a long way from providing "fair and accurate" information themselves, made clear by Abdurazzakov's disingenuous remarks concerning border transit and visa issues with Tajikistan, which we know to be troublesome and far from simple to resolve. Abdurazzakov did acknowledge however that improved bilateral relations would have "huge" economic potential for Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

16. (C) Abdurazzakov's comments are nothing new as they parrot the GOU official line, which Uzbek officials repeat incessantly, in classic Soviet style. What we find interesting is that this Uzbek diplomat seems to be adhering strictly to a Tashkent script, which may have been shared widely with Uzbek diplomats around the world in discussing Uzbekistan's relations with the U.S.

17. (U) Post collaborated with Embassy Tashkent on this

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telegram.
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